

# “Month of the Military Child” Celebrations in the Commonwealth of Virginia



Presented to the Virginia Council on  
the Interstate Compact on Educational  
Opportunity for Military Children

April 29, 2014

Melissa Luchau  
Military Family Education Liaison  
Virginia Department of Education

[←](#) [→](#) [C](#) [n](#) [http://www.virginia.gov/support/student\\_family/military/index.shtml](#)

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### STUDENT & FAMILY SERVICES

## MILITARY FAMILIES

**News & Announcements**

April is the "Month of the Military Child." School divisions are encouraged to take time to recognize the nation's military servicemen and servicewomen, their families and their children. See [Recognize & Celebrate Military Children](#) for ways to celebrate the "Month of the Military Child" in your area.

Across the nation, Tuesday, April 15, 2014, will be the day to "Purple Up" on that date to show support for our military kids and to thank them for their service.

Given that Virginia is home to some of the nation's largest and most important military installations, it is no surprise that the commonwealth's schools educate more military children than almost any other state. In fact, because of its proximity to military bases, there are children with parents or guardians on active duty in Virginia. As of December 2012, the Defense Manpower Data Center (DMDC) estimated that approximately 233,778 total, military-associated children of active duty men and women were living in the United States. To learn more about the demographics of service members and their dependents, please see the [Military Community](#) (FCF) report published by the Office of the Deputy Under Secretary of Defense.

Virginia's public schools are committed to the care and education of the children of military families. By partnering with school liaison officers, military leaders, educators and community organizations, the Department provides resources about the unique support needed for military service members and their families during transition and deployment.

TIP: Use the menu to the right to navigate to sub-sections of this topic:

- [Virginia Council on the Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity](#)
- [Guidance Documents & Training Materials](#)
- [Virginia Laws Related to the Education of Military Children](#)
- [School Liaison Officers Contact Information](#)

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### RESOURCES

## RECOGNIZE & CELEBRATE MILITARY CHILDREN

**News & Announcements**

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Across the nation, Tuesday, April 15, 2014, will be the day to "Purple Up! For Military Kids." People are being encouraged to wear purple on that date to show support for our military kids and to thank them for their strength and sacrifices.

April was designated as "The Month of the Military Child" by former Secretary of Defense, Caspar W. Weinberger in 1986 to recognize the contributions of children whose parents serve in the military and celebrate their spirit.

Often military children are looked up to for their resilience and ability to deal with life-changing events, but frequent moves, family separations through deployments and reintegration issues following deployments make life especially challenging for many military children.

School divisions are encouraged to take time in April, and throughout the year, to recognize the service of military servicemen and servicewomen, their families and their children. See [this letter](#) from the Military Interstate Children's Compact Commission (MIC3) for more information about the "Month of the Military Child."

Here are some possible "Month of the Military Child" activities:

- Create a "Wall of Honor" which features photos and short stories about service members connected to the school.
- Invite a veterans group to demonstrate flag etiquette and flag folding.
- Establish a Patriotic Day and encourage educators and students to wear patriotic colors.
- Invite service members to speak with classes about what it's like to be in the military.
- On April 15 participate in Purple Up! by wearing purple in recognition of military kids, families and friends. For more information, see the [Virginia 4-H Military Club flyer](#) about the month of the military child.
- Present military youth with a [Certificate of Recognition](#). Service members are often recognized with certificates and medals for their outstanding service, and children will be able to hang their own certificate on the wall along with those of their parents.

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# Memo to Superintendents and School Counselors

Superintendent's Memo #079-14



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA  
Department of Education

April 4, 2014

TO: Division Superintendents

FROM: Patricia I. Wright, Superintendent of Public Instruction

**SUBJECT: Month of the Military Child**

Governor Terry McAuliffe has recognized April 2014 as Military Child Month in the Commonwealth of Virginia. The Governor's [proclamation](#) coincides with the Military Interstate Children's Compact Commission [recognition](#) of this special celebration to honor military children.

Often military children are looked up to for their resilience and ability to deal with life-changing events, but frequent moves, family separations through deployments and reintegration issues following deployments make life especially challenging for many military children. School divisions are encouraged to take time in April, and throughout the year, to recognize the service of military servicemen and servicewomen, their families and their children.

Across the nation, Tuesday, April 15, 2014, will be the day to "Purple Up! For Military Kids." People are encouraged to wear purple on April 15th to show support for our military kids and to thank them for their strength and sacrifices. For more ideas of how to celebrate military children in your school and division, please visit the ["Recognize and Celebrate Military Children"](#) page of the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) Web page.

We invite you to share photos and/or a description of your school's and division's "Month of the Military Child" events and activities with the [Department of Education](#) so they can be shared on our Web site and presented to the Virginia Council on the Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children.

Please also take time to visit the [military families' page](#) of the VDOE Web site which includes updated resources and tools for school divisions and military families. The resource pages include:

- [Virginia Council on the Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children](#) - includes information on the Council's quarterly meetings and annual reports. The Virginia Council, created by the 2009 General Assembly, was formed to assist in easing the transition of the children of military families into school as a result of frequent moves and deployment of their parents.
- [Guidance Documents & Training Materials](#) - includes guidance documents on key issues like special education transfers, graduation requirements, enrollment, and implementation of the Compact. The guidance documents are designed to provide technical assistance for school officials, administrators and teachers in formulating local policies and decisions.



# Governor's Proclamation

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Governor Terry McAuliffe  
Common Ground for Virginia

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## Month Of The Military Child

4/1/2014

**WHEREAS**, thousands of brave Americans demonstrate their courage and commitment to freedom by serving the Armed Forces of the United States both on Active Duty and in the National Guard and Reserves; and

**WHEREAS**, there are approximately 250,000 children (of whom 75,000 are school-aged) with parents serving the military either on Active Duty, in the National Guard or Reserves and stationed in Virginia; and

**WHEREAS**, Virginia has one of the highest numbers of military school age children in the nation and is committed to being an active participant in the Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children which facilitates military children's transition in school systems across state lines; and

**WHEREAS**, the Commonwealth of Virginia is partnering with the U.S. Department of Defense to increase access to affordable, quality childcare for military children; and

**WHEREAS**, the youth of our service members continue to make significant contributions to family, schools, communities, the nation and our Commonwealth, despite prolonged and repeated absences of one or both parents; and

**WHEREAS**, these children are a source of pride and honor to us all, and it is only fitting that we take the time to recognize their contributions, celebrate their spirit, and let our men and women in uniform know that while they are taking care of us, we are taking care of their children; and

**WHEREAS**, the recognition of the "Month of the Military Child" allows us to pay tribute to military children for their commitment, patience, courage and unconditional support of their parents;

**NOW, THEREFORE**, I, Terence R. McAuliffe, do hereby recognize April 2014 as **Month of the Military Child** in our **COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA**, and I call this observance to the attention of our citizens.

# “Art of Being a Military Child”

Art exhibit at Lynnhaven Mall featuring City of Virginia Beach Public School students' artwork about military children – on display all April



\* partnership between Naval Air Station (NAS) Oceana, Joint Expeditionary Base (JEB) Little Creek-Fort Story, Virginia Beach City Public Schools (VBCPS) and Lynnhaven Mall



# Celebrations in Virginia Beach City Public Schools

- “We Serve Too” Banners
- Assembly to share personal testimonies of military students



# Homepage Recognition

A commitment to provide all students with the necessary skills to thrive as 21st century learners, workers and citizens.

## VIRGINIA BEACH CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

2512 George Mason Drive • P.O. Box 6038 Virginia Beach, Virginia 23456-0038 757.263.1000 • 757.263.1240 TDD

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**VBCPS honors**  
**Month of the**  
**Military Child**

1 2 3 4 5

### HEADLINE NEWS

Federal grant application information presented to School Board 04/24/14

Plaza Middle wins national Environmental Sustainability Innovation Award 04/23/14

Check out the latest edition of Apple-A-Day 04/22/14

Annual Student Art Show set for Pembroke Mall 04/22/14

Meet the newest member of the Compass Keepers Club, Dey's Debbie Cathey 04/21/14

VBCPS launches new survey for community input 04/21/14

VBCPS takes part in 'Art for Change' 04/15/14

'The Power of Belief' is perfect for gift giving 04/15/14

Cooke students receive spring break beach bags 04/14/14

PAHS alum Pharrell Williams talks about the important role teachers played in shaping his

### TWITTER



Carrie Gantt  
@CarrieGantt

9h

Tara Opitz reads her poem "A  
Celebration of Deterioration" at the



### COMPASS TO 2015

Strategic Objectives  
Engage F.



# Ringling Blue Star

Organized by Ringling Brothers Circus and Blue Star Families, circus performers visited the base and held a private show for military families





# In-Service Training

Teaching our future teachers about the unique needs  
of military children, the Interstate Compact, and the  
Month of the Military Child



# N. B. Clements Jr. High School, Prince George County Public Schools



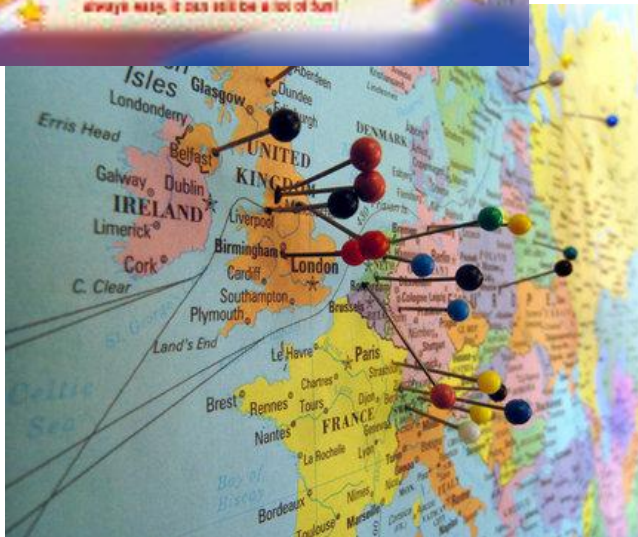
Student2Student (S2S) events to celebrate military youth

- Breakfast catered by Chick-Fil-A
- Military student luncheon
- Cookout for dependent students





# William A. Walton Elementary, Prince George County Public Schools



- Home Front Helper Certificates
- Military parents reading to students
- Bring your Service member to Lunch Day – April 24
- World Map to show where military students have lived









# Prince George High School, Prince George County Public Schools



- Daily announcement of “Month of the Military Child” recognition
- Pizza luncheon for new military students – April 9
- Token of appreciation given to each military youth at Student2Student (S2S) meeting – April 21
- Developing a “Military Child Wall of Fame”
- S2S ice-cream social – April 30

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**Military Child Education Coalition**  
...for the sake of the child.

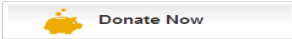
Need Help?        

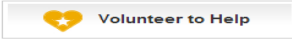
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## Student 2 Student and Junior Student 2 Student

Students  
**Military-Connected Students Teaching Educators Video Competition**

 **Donate Now**

 **Volunteer to Help**

<http://www.militarychild.org/parents-and-students/programs/student-2-student>



# Celebrating Diversity in STEM

"Sneak Peek" into the 3rd USA Science & Engineering Festival  
for military youth



COL Gadson, Garrison Commander, Fort Belvoir,  
hosts Walt Whitman Middle School

# Pre-K Kinder Campus Tours

Pre-K Kinder Campus Tours to positively impact school adjustment by beginning to shape the child's expectations and social skills  
April 9-10, Fairfax County



\* School Support Services at Ft. Belvoir, in coordination with US Army Child Youth & School Services Strong Beginnings program and FCPS



# Kids Fest/Teen Fest, Ft. Belvoir

A carnival style event for local military families



# Partners in Education Project The Belvoir Eagle

2 Belvoir Eagle  
April 24, 2014

## April is Month of the Military Child

April is the Month of the Military Child. For the second year, the *Belvoir Eagle* has partnered with students of military Families in recognition of their contributions and support to the lives and careers of their military parent (or parents) to create this insert. Submissions came from Mount Vernon High School and, for the first time, Walt Whitman Middle School.

The stories offer insight into the character of these young men and women and the pride they feel for the service of their parents. These young people display,

through their words and art, personal resilience in facing the challenges of their own lives and an admiration for the resilience and accomplishment of their peers. This year the student chose to focus on transitions. Not only did they write about how moving is both a blessing and difficult, they presented personal solutions to the difficult times. From getting involved in school to finding a voice in the arts to hitting the field, these children knew what it means to be "Born Ready And Tough" in the military.

## Moving Along: Military brats make the most out of transitions

By Mary Logan and Sarah Donnelly

We were all sitting around the dinner table when the conversation starts. "I talked to my dad about today. He is cutting me some orders. We're moving in two months."

When I was younger, a revelation like this would have opened the door to new adventures, new friends, a new home and endless possibilities. Now that I am in high school, it seems to slam the door on existing friendships, my standing with my sports teams, and even the comfort in my present school and my classes. Just the thought of dismantling my room, the first I haven't had to share in my life, makes me cringe. I can feel a warm tingling anger in the pit of my stomach, mixed with impending anxiety. I never signed up for this crazy life, and sometimes, it gets to me. Don't all the experts say that a child needs stability to thrive? Well, hello, my world just became a lot less stable.

As dinner ends and the dishes are cleared, my sisters

and I look at each other. It is my father who serves. He has been in the Navy for the last 25 years, but we have lived in the same home for the last six years. Unfortunately, the last four years have been without my dad. Sometimes, military Families have difficult decisions to make, and my parents decided four years ago that since three of us would be in high school, it would be best for the "continuity of our education" for my mom to stay here with us while my dad moved. He has since moved three times, while we stayed on Fort Belvoir. We all miss my dad, but we have learned to rely around and contribute to the wellness of our Family. Somewhere deep within each military brat is a steady resolve to make the best of the hand that we have been dealt. Don't get me wrong, we may not like the dealer very much, but we know how to play our cards. My experience as a "military brat" has been far less tumultuous than many other military dependents. Especially since 9/11, there have been

Illustration by Adam Cyle



Col. Gregory D. Gadson  
Garrison Commander

Stephen Brooks

## Social media and military Families

By Jaelyn Quayle

Advances in technology have enabled our generation to have networks such as Facebook, Twitter, Skype, Oovoo, Tumblr, Instagram, and many others. Sites like these sometimes get a bad reputation for ensuring today's teens in a cyclone of technology, but these sites are also responsible for bringing together Families that are split across states, time zones, and even countries.

When it comes to military Families, and especially deployed Soldiers, Skype, Facetime and Oovoo are the most common forms of communication via video-chat. Being able to communicate with loved ones really decreases some of the worry and frustration of not being able to see that person. Knowing they are okay is a remarkable feeling.

For a child to see his or her parent, sibling or cousin, regardless of country or time zone, is priceless.

The feeling is indescribable, whether it's an exchange of, "I love you," or a reprimand that you would probably rather avoid. Just being able to see that person and hear their voice again, means everything.

I know firsthand what it is like having a deployed parent. Skype made it easier for me to get through the separation. I was able to see my dad and tell him what was going on, how my day was, and sometimes even get yelled at a little. Social networking made me feel better about what was going on, put my mind at ease,



Illustration by Anthony Lundstedt

Afghanistan. Since then, communication has only gotten better." Technology brings us still closer, in other ways. Devin Johnson, currently a seventh grader at Walt Whitman Middle School, has a father

who is currently deployed to South Korea. Devin has had a unique experience with his father while he is deployed due to current technology. He has a device that he calls a "ling box." This network keeps connected to the Fami and laptop.

The first time that I used the "ling box" — he was shocked to see I changed channel, seemed But after he confronted with the strange occur relieved to find that t changing of the channel his father, a world aw The network has ensb remain closer to his fa down and watch a she as if he had never left. Having these types of our fingertips is an s The ways we are able catch with each other lo stay close at heart t miles, states, or countr

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## Poetry

### B.R.A.T.: Born Ready And Tough

By Alex Carrera

What it means to be a military brat  
At age 4 it meant trying on your parents' combat boots when they're not looking  
At age 7 it meant getting snatched for a call when your parents have been gone for 7 months  
At age 10 it meant helping your friend whose parent didn't come home  
At age 14 the morning doesn't seem odd, just orders  
But at age 15 it means you've created strong bonds with great people. The ability to say you've been there — and there too. A military brat never signs up to be a military brat. They are just Born to Be Ready And Tough.

b.r.a.t.

### I guess this is goodbye

By Samantha Grimes

Restless heart and flitting eyes  
It's never easier saying goodbye  
With landscape fading by again  
Wandering faces, places, who and when

Time and time again we reach,  
With stumbling hands, out to breach  
New legs on which we stand or we fall  
Upon the floor of the new school hall  
But bearing with smiles — weaned but bright —  
We toke to the crowd in growing delight  
New faces, new stories, just like a game  
And hoping against hope we remember their names

Assembling ourselves anew each time  
To present like the lines of a poem in rhyme  
Our names are the easiest, concealed in a "hey"  
From where? "Oh, everywhere," we will say

Kansas, Florida, Texas too  
We grew up in Germany (we swear it's true)  
No, we aren't Korean or German or French  
But our wanderlust can be seen to quench  
We move and we smile, in temporary content  
In happy nostalgia for days soon spent  
For always another duty awaits  
For the life of a brat is ruled by the fates.

WE ARE  
THE WISH  
FLOWERS

Illustration by Eric Gips

## Wish-Flowers

By Samantha Grimes

We are the dandelions  
Drifting (seemingly aimlessly)  
Across an expanse of fields  
Drifting (lawn to lawn, hose to hose)  
Family is the most important thing so we work together to defend it.

We are the wish-flowers  
Golden in youth (we stretch and grow)  
The embodiment of hope  
Golden in youth (we reach for the sun)  
We are the wish-flowers

We are the dreamers, the believers,  
The whispered prayers under star-spangled skies  
The shared Daddy Home Sids  
We are the dandelions  
We are the wish-flowers



Photo by Sam

## Living with a single parent in the military

By Dasendes McNeal

The military holds a special place in the hearts of many. It seems that almost every one has a military connection, with a parent, sibling, cousin, or friend. Whenever you hear about the uniform services, you cannot help but envision the epitome of security, as those in uniform help to keep us safe.

What seems to be lesser known is the effect of the military on military Families.

While many people realize that military dependents experience substantial stresses due to a military lifestyle, people are often unaware of the difficulties faced by single-parent households.

My name is Dasendes McNeal and my mom is a Soldier in the Army. My mother has been in the Army for more than 20 years and I am grateful for her service.

Nonetheless, sometimes the military life has been hard for me. Like many others in the Army, my mom has been deployed many times,

but unlike many two-parent homes, when my mom is deployed, I do not remain in the same place. Instead, my mother sends me to live with my grandmother.

While my mom is gone for 12-18 months, I spend the duration of that time in a place that never quite feels like home.

Sometimes the timing works out and I get to complete a school year, but not always. There have been occasions when I have had to leave everything in the middle of the year, literally dropping my old life and take on a new one.

When the military moves us to a different state, at least I am with my mom, and my Family is still together. Deployment is the hardest time for me. It's a time when I need her the most. I'm in a new place, surrounded by people I have never met, and the only thing I want is my mommy.

Some people might think that these are the same struggles faced by all military children, but in all honesty, they are not. My mother and

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# Purple Up Celebrations



Petersburg

Virginia Tech

